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VOLUME LXIII, NUMBER 19263 WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12, 1996

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Report highlights
 EVELYN GORDON

WHILE the comptroller's report this year focused on the problems of road safety and immigrant absorption, it dealt with a wide range of other issues as well. The following are some of the highlights of the report.

- Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet hired dozens of new employees for his ministry. Among these were party activists, people who did work unrelated to the ministry's goals, and people brought in by lying to the Civil Service Commission about their job descriptions. In addition, the ministry largely ignored its obligation to set up new religious councils after the 1993 municipal elections, and the heads of religious councils were often vastly overpaid.
- Army reserve duty is unfairly divided up, resulting in low morale. The number of go-shows for reserve duty increased 54% from 1992 to 1995, and the army's "solution" to the problem was to call up twice the number of people it actually needed.
- Millions of dollars worth of equipment paid for by the Defense Ministry never made it to IDF warehouses, and neither the ministry nor the army have any idea where this equipment is.
- Many hospital patients who require intensive care are placed in other units instead, largely because the Health Ministry reimburses hospitals for only 20-30% of the costs of intensive care.
- Huge amounts of sewage and hazardous material flow unchecked into the country's water system each year, threatening both the water supply and the public's health.
- The Housing Ministry's "Build Your Own Apartment Program" meant to subsidize the needy, wound up subsidizing the more well-off instead. The ministry also lost NIS 3.8 billion over four years by undercharging contractors for infrastructure development and then failing to collect even the fees it did charge.
- The undervaluation of state lands by the Justice Ministry has cost the state hundreds of millions of shekels a year.
- The Labor Ministry is negligent in supervising protected housing for the elderly, and most such institutions do not even have licenses. It has also made no plans to deal with the long-term problems posed by the 12-fold increase in foreign workers since 1993.
- Education in the Druze and Arab sectors is still underfunded, though the situation has improved over the past few years. The Education Ministry's funding of haredi cultural activities was discriminatory.
- The Treasury and the Bank of Israel are negligent in their supervision of provident funds.
- Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer made several political appointments in the Israel Building Center.
- Civil Guard volunteers are not properly trained in the use of weapons, and the police do not check whether volunteers have a psychiatric history that would make them ineligible to bear weapons.
- Private investigators who wiretap or otherwise violate people's privacy are not punished by the Justice Ministry.



State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat presents Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss with her annual report yesterday. (Isaac Horani)

Comptroller hits war on accidents, absorption policy, slams Shetreet

THE government's efforts to combat the country's major killer - road accidents - are inadequate and often misdirected, the 1996 State Comptroller's Report said.

"From the point of view of the number of deaths, [road accidents] exceed any enemy," State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat said yesterday as she presented the report to the Knesset State Control Committee. "I hope [the report] will help the country find solutions."

Among Ben-Porat's findings are that the government is ignoring the long-term solution of developing better public transportation; that both the number of tickets issued and the number of licenses revoked has dropped, thereby undermining deterrence of traffic violations; and that though overloaded trucks are a major source of accidents, weight limits here are much higher than they are in Europe, and the Transport Ministry fails to enforce the limits it does set.

The second major topic addressed is immigrant absorption, which the report found is "still not the top national priority" that it should be. As a result, immigrants' immense talent and brainpower are largely being wasted in inappropriate jobs, the report said.

The report also deals with several perennial issues, such as political appointments and wasted money. In the former category, the major perpetrators were Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer. Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar was also scored for awarding a disproportionate number of road development projects to municipalities with Labor Party mayors, rather than implementing such projects on the basis of professional criteria.

Three items in the report have already been transferred to Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair so that he can consider opening

criminal investigations, Ben-Porat said. One of these involved the National Council for Accident Prevention, which has twice received government funds for projects to detect traffic violations and identify violators. The comptroller found that the 3,000 volunteers allegedly working on the project are largely fictional.

Full comptroller report coverage, pages 8-12

The second item involved the Upper Nazareth office of the Israel Broadcasting Authority's licensing division, which, according to the report, falsely reported payments and failed to deposit cash payments in the bank.

The third item related to two roads in the South which the Housing Ministry's Public Works Department hired a particular contractor to pave. The contractor was paid to use a certain standard of material, but actually used cheaper, inferior materials - with the PWD's knowledge - resulting in damage to the roads which cost hundreds of millions of shekels to repair.

"There are also other matters which we are still considering [sending to Ben-Yair]," Ben-Porat said.

Asked by Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss to look back on her eight years as comptroller, Ben-Porat said every government she has dealt with has taken her reports seriously. Sometimes, she added, they have even fixed the problems she pointed out.

"But new faults surface all the time," she said. "I have to be on guard to ensure that power doesn't corrupt" - because the knowledge that there is someone watching is often the

only check on waste and corruption, she said.

"I expect the government to do more to inspect itself, precisely because of the power it has, so that we will be a society based on morality."

Ben-Porat stressed that the upcoming elections had not influenced the report in any way.

"I wrote what I found," she said. "I did not change a word of what I wrote because of the early elections."

The State Control Committee, meanwhile, decided to begin discussing the report before the elections. Committee chairman David Magen (Likud) had raised the possibility of postponing hearings until after the elections, so that they would not be perceived as political, but opposition MKs insisted that certain topics are too critical to be put off for five weeks. The committee's initial discussions will focus on road safety, the Religious Affairs Ministry, the Housing Ministry, and the Israel Lands Administration.

The committee will also give precedence to the report's discussion of the unequal allocation of army reserve duty, at the request of Ra'anana Cohen (Labor). Cohen, who noted that 80 percent of all reserve duty is done by 30% of the reservists, while half of all potential reservists are never called up at all, demanded that the committee use its authority under a recent amendment to set up a state commission of inquiry into this subject.

Ben-Porat, however, opposed this idea, saying it is premature. First, the committee should find out what the army plans to do about the problem, she said, and, then, if the army does nothing, it should try to solve the problem by legislation.

Opposition MKs predictably blasted the government for the report's findings.

(Continued on Page 2)

US, Israel sign accord on fight against terror

HILLEL KUTTLER and DAVID MAKOVSKY
 WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Shimon Peres yesterday signed an accord that will deepen anti-terrorism cooperation through research and development and intelligence sharing.

"Today, with the US-Israel Counter-Terrorism Accord, we strengthen our partnership to stop the enemies of peace. With every big step on the path to peace, the enemies grow more and more desperate and know a new day is dawning in the Middle East," Clinton told journalists following the signing. "By murdering innocent people, they hope to murder the growing hope for peace."

"We must do everything in our power to stop the killing and bring the terrorists to justice. That is the only way to give those that have chosen peace the confidence they need that they have made the right choice ... This agreement does just that."

Peres and Clinton also discussed the international effort to help reconstruct Lebanon following Operation Grapes of Wrath. In a joint communique, Clinton and Peres stated a committee headed by Barak and Christopher would explore the formalizing of strategic cooperation.

Following the meeting with Clinton, Christopher gave Peres a letter containing an appendix to the cease-fire agreement stating that the US "understands" that the prohibition against attacks on Israel from southern Lebanon refers not only to "use of certain areas as launching grounds for attacks," but also to their use as "bases for the launch of attacks." Peres told reporters that he was "very satisfied" with the contents of the letter.

Peres also raised the issue of the release of Jonathan Pollard, but would not reveal any details.

Speaking to reporters on his flight to Washington, Peres charged that Iran is pressing Islamic Jihad very hard to stage terror attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets abroad.

"Iran is pressing for actions abroad. Iran is pressing like crazy on Jihad," he said. He indicated he is concerned about "significant" cells recently uncovered in Latin America and France.

He also insisted Iran is giving Hamas, over which it holds less sway, bonuses for attacks it carries out against Israel. According to a recent report by *The Times* of London, Iran gave Damascus-based Hamas leader Imad Alami \$120,000 as a "bonus" for the spate of suicide attacks.

He attacked four unspecified European countries which just extended credits to Iran, terming this a "fatal mistake."

He said Israel would be active in seeking to encourage the establishment of an international consortium on behalf of Lebanon, just as there is one on behalf of the Palestinians. However, he said Israel is nowhere near deciding how it would assist Lebanon.

The anti-terror agreement seeks to expand bilateral cooperation, and consultation with other nations in preventing terrorism and responding to terrorist incidents.

It looks at "very practical ways in which we can work together," Clinton said, and provides for "greater cooperation" through exchanges of data, training, expert delegations, crisis-management expertise for handling terrorist episodes, high-level anti-terrorism policy coordination, and assisting other countries in the fight against terrorism.

It also provides for extradition of terrorist suspects and establishes a committee of counter-terrorism experts. The group will meet regularly during the year, alternating between the two countries and will also hold discussions as necessary.

Clinton said he and Peres discussed such an agreement during his visit to Israel in March.

The signing was postponed due to severe fog in New York that delayed Peres' arrival here and necessitated a more modest ceremony than planned.

Before leaving Washington late last night, Peres was to meet with visiting Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. He indicated that he expected one of the topics to be the release of 25 women prisoners.

Five of those prisoners need to be pardoned, since they were convicted of being accomplices to murder. President Ezer Weizman has the authority to pardon three of them, and OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan the other two.

Russia continuing to close down Jewish Agency aliya operations

THE Russian authorities yesterday stopped aliya activities in the town of Piatrgorsk, raising fears that Jewish emigration from Russia may be halted.

Officials of the Ministry of Emigration and police arrived at the offices of the Jewish Agency in Piatrgorsk at noon, and told the officials there to present documents certifying their accreditation to operate in the area, the agency spokesman said.

Later, the officials asked the emissaries to accompany them to an aliya seminar being held in the city and proceeded to read aloud a decision by the deputy justice minister forbidding the agency to operate in Russia as of April 2. Seminar participants were ordered to disperse.

Piatrgorsk, in the northern Caucasus, is an area of many ethnic and political tensions, and there has been heavy emigration from the region. The agency uses the town as one of its regional activity centers. In recent months, Jewish refugees from nearby Chechnya have also congregated there.

Any disruption of the activities in the area will disrupt aliya, agency officials confirmed last night.

The cancellation of the semi-

nar is one more episode in a string of events over the past three weeks that have raised doubts regarding Russia's attitude toward agency activities.

On April 8, a letter from the director of the Russian Council for Cultural and Religious Organizations effectively withdrew the agency's mandate. This was followed by a letter from the deputy minister of justice to all local authorities notifying them of the cancellation of the accreditation and the need to stop Jewish Agency activity. The head of the CIS department in the agency's head office in Jerusalem was dispatched to Moscow for talks with officials there.

The closure of the agency's offices in Birobjan followed, then notification was sent to agency offices in bordering Makhachkale about the closure. The authorities then announced they would reevaluate the Na'ale-16 program, which brings teenagers to Israel without their parents for study and possible aliya. The authorities also announced they would investigate the permits of the agency's emissaries.

A measurable increase in anti-semitic incidents in Russia has

US report: Syria still sponsoring terror

HILLEL KUTTLER
 WASHINGTON

ALTHOUGH Syria is involved in peace negotiations with Israel, it continues to shelter terrorist groups and their training camps. The US State Department said in a report released yesterday.

It again listed the same seven countries last year's report said sponsored terrorism: Syria, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Cuba, Sudan, and North Korea.

The report states that Palestinian attacks against Israelis declined from 79 to 33, representing "less frequent, but more lethal suicide bombings, with five actions claimed by Islamic Jihad's Shkaki faction and five by Hamas."

"Damascus continues to negotiate seriously to achieve a peace accord with Israel and has taken some steps to restrain the international activities of these groups," the annual report on patterns of global terrorism says.

(Continued on Page 2)

Ya'alon: Terror attack expected in coming days

LIAT COLLINS

OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon said yesterday there are intensive preparations by terror groups and Iran to launch attacks in Israel and abroad against Israeli and Jewish targets.

According to an official briefing, Ya'alon told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. "I expect this will be our fate in the coming days."

"We see intensive activity both by Hamas and Islamic Jihad to carry out attacks in Israel, and by Hizbullah and Iran abroad," the military intelligence chief said.

He said Hamas and Islamic Jihad have an active infrastructure which has not been eliminated since the last wave of attacks.

Regarding the possibility of attacks abroad, he said the Iraqis are investing a great deal in creating a terror infrastructure. All attacks wind up being connected to Iranian intelligence or Iran's Revolutionary Guard, he said.

Despite the pessimism, Ya'alon said the Palestinian Authority has hit at a large part of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad infrastructure in areas under its control. He said they had found activists and storage places for weapons and ammunition including 1,000 kilograms of TNT hidden in Gaza.

In contrast to previous reports, Ya'alon said the Palestinian Authority is making an effort to stamp out the terrorists operating from the autonomous areas but the main leaders have yet to be caught.

Ya'alon also referred to the two recent "work accidents" by terrorists who blew themselves up before they could carry out attacks. He said both terrorists belonged to extremist Islamic organizations. Both cases showed characteristics seen in suicide attacks.

He said the Palestinians are expecting the IDF withdrawal from Hebron to go ahead as fast as possible but would probably accept a well-defined plan for withdrawal in stages.

He added that even if the statements about the changes in the Palestinian Covenant are ambiguous, the intention to change it is clear and was reached by an impressive majority. He said Yasser Arafat remains the clear leader of the Palestinians.



Begin: Government in conspiracy with PLO on covenant

JON IMMANUEL

THE Palestinian National Council resolution which cancelled articles of the PLO Covenant has been altered retroactively to conform to the wishes of the Israeli government, Likud MK Ze'ev Begin said yesterday.

Begin made his charges after talking yesterday with OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon in the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

"What appears now is that there is no [single] version of the resolution. This is a conspiracy concealed from the Israeli electorate by the Israeli government and the PLO," he said in an interview yesterday.

Begin pointed out that decisions taken on other issues at last week's PNC meetings were published together in the Palestinian press. Omitted, however, was the crucial resolution on the charter. He said that Ya'alon told him this was because "there is still an argument about the specific wording."

The resolution, which was passed in closed session of the PNC by 504-54 last Wednesday night, was published in slightly different forms in the Arabic press the next morning, some alluding to a change in the covenant that will take place, others to a change that takes place now.

According to Wafa, the PLO press agency, which distributed an apparently official version the next day, the PNC decided:

1. "It is changing the national charter by canceling the articles

which contradict the letters of mutual recognition."

2. "The PNC instructs its legal committee to draft a new national program and to present it to the central council in its next meeting."

Several PNC members present at the session have told *The Jerusalem Post* that this was the text of the resolution on which they voted. "It is changing" expresses the present tense but can sometimes refer to a future action.

Everybody in the closed session understood that the covenant was canceled from the moment the resolution was passed. "It is canceled. The old charter is inoperative," said Hanan Ashrawi, who voted against the resolution because she wanted to delay the change.

The resolutions did not mention the specific articles that were canceled, but the Oslo agreements did not identify specific articles. Some Palestinian notables have mentioned four, others seven or 10. Nabil Shaath mentioned 16.

Exactly which articles have been canceled will only be clear from the text of the new charter which chief PLO negotiator Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) said will be presented within six months.

Begin, however, quoted Ya'alon as saying the new charter will appear sometime "in the next three years," accompanying the final talks to their conclusion.



Mourners raise their hands yesterday in a bid to carry coffins of some of the 102 people who were killed by IDF shells at Kaf Karna. Political and religious leaders of all Lebanese parties and sects joined thousands of mourners at the funeral, as Lebanon's top Shiite Moslem cleric Sheikh Mohammed Mehdi Shamseddine called the killing an 'Israeli crime.' The dead were buried together in a special grave laid out with 102 concrete and brick niches in a plot next to the headquarters of the Fijian contingent to UNIFIL. (AP)

IDF, SLA return fire in first Hizbullah attack since cease-fire

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN and LIAT COLLINS

HIZBULLAH fired mortars and anti-aircraft cannons at two South Lebanon Army positions yesterday, drawing retaliatory fire by the IDF and SLA, the army said. There were no reports of injuries or damage.

It was the first exchange of fire since Operation Grapes of Wrath ended on Saturday with an agreement to leave civilians out of the cycle of violence. According to the agreement, the IDF and SLA maintain the right to defend themselves and return fire at Hizbullah gunmen.

The SLA position hit was at Sojod on the northern edge of the security zone. Security sources said Israeli gunners fired back about two dozen 155mm artillery rounds.

Hizbullah will undoubtedly try to whittle away at the understandings reached with Israel last week, OC Intelligence Maj.-Gen. Moshe Ya'alon told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday. He said the key to the understandings would be what happens following the elections and regarding the resumption of peace negotia-

tions. Syria will then determine whether it serves its interest to preserve the understandings, he said.

Ya'alon said the campaign had shown up some differences between Hizbullah and Syria. Hizbullah had not wanted to conclude the hostilities but Syria forced it to, he said. Syria was apparently angry at Hizbullah for dragging it into the campaign and even accused it of violating the previous understandings, reached following Operation Accountability in 1993.

Ya'alon said Syria agreed to the recent understandings because it feared an offensive by IDF ground forces and Israeli attacks in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley.

Hizbullah applied the lessons it learned from Operation Accountability, Ya'alon said. Among other tactics, it stored missiles close to the launchers and dispersed the launchers

among villages. It planned to use 100 missiles a day but ultimately fired only 80 of them daily.

Hizbullah decided in advance not to escalate the violence to avoid a strong Israeli response, Ya'alon said, noting that it had used about half its arsenal of 2,000 missiles.

Ya'alon said the Lebanese government had shown greater independence than in the past. Although it still required Syrian endorsement, it was speaking out more, he said. "If it was up to Beirut, Hizbullah would be thrown out of southern Lebanon," he said.

Asked about the civilian displacement during the campaign, Ya'alon said: "[Syrian President Hafez] Assad doesn't shed a tear over a single refugee."

He said Hizbullah obscured the figures of its casualties while playing up the number of civilians killed. Although between 163 and 200 Lebanese were killed in the campaign including civilians, soldiers and terrorists, he said.

Unmanned aerial vehicle has strong support on Capital Hill

HILLEL KUTTLER WASHINGTON

SENATE majority whip Trent Lott (R-Mississippi) pledged to seek \$24 million this year for further US-Israel development of the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).

Lott, who chairs the strategic forces subcommittee, told an AIPAC forum Monday night that the program would give both countries the capability to knock down enemy missiles before they leave enemy territory. Last year \$15 million was allocated.

Lott said later that the funds would be budgeted in the defense authorization bill to be prepared this week, and that the proposal enjoys strong bipartisan support.

"We want to go the next step beyond the Arrow program," Lott told *The Jerusalem Post*. "It's just the next step in missile defense [cooperation]." The boost-phase intercept and Arrow programs, along with the recently announced Nautilus laser venture, are the three major joint missile defense programs.

Lott said that in Monday's meeting between Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and other Senate leaders, the discussion dealt mainly with missile defense issues.

Lautenberg Center annual dinner will be non-kosher, and begin on Shabbat

JUDY SIEGEL

THE annual fundraising dinner for Jerusalem's Lautenberg Center for General and Tumor Immunology, to be held in New York's Grand Hyatt Hotel on Saturday, will be non-kosher and begin before the end of Shabbat, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned. It is highly unusual for American gala dinners benefiting Israeli organizations to violate Shabbat and kashruth.

Rabbi Ronald Gray, executive vice president of Boys Town Jerusalem Foundation of America (BTJFA), yesterday demanded a public apology from the American Friends organization of the

Lautenberg Center because BTJFA's chairman Josh Weston is the guest of honor of the dinner and was unaware of these breaches of Jewish observance.

A few weeks ago, the fact that Laurence Tisch, the billionaire owner of the Lorillard Tobacco Company, would be dinner chairman raised the ire of anti-smoking activists in the US and Israel.

Gray wrote a protest letter to Paul Denson, chairman of the endowment committee of the Lautenberg Center's American

friends group. Boys Town is an Orthodox educational institution for boys in Jerusalem's Bayit Vegan quarter.

"In this day, when the main thread of unity of our people is in the name of 'Jewish continuity,' it's difficult to understand how such a prestigious Israel institution could hold a major function which undermines two of the basic tenets of our sacred heritage - Shabbat and the dietary laws," Gray wrote.

The Post called Denson's office,

but no comment was available. An official of the Lautenberg Center in Jerusalem, which conducts cancer research under the auspices of the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School, said guests at the dinner were told they could order kosher packaged dinners from a New York restaurant that would be heated up on the site. The official said he was very sorry to hear about the Shabbat and kashruth violation. Prof. David Weiss, the Lautenberg Center's director, who is on sabbatical in New York, is Orthodox, and reportedly will arrive late to the dinner.

Weizman warmly received in Moslem villages for Id el-Adha festival

BATSHEVA TSUR

CONTRARY to the advice of the security forces, President Ezer Weizman yesterday stepped directly into the midst of a cheering crowd in the western Galilee village of Arrabe, shook hands with the villagers and accepted an invitation to the local mosque.

Weizman was on a tour of four Moslem villages to mark the Id el-Adha festival. He also visited Abu el-Hija, Sakhnin and Deir Hanna.

The festival was celebrated in subdued fashion this year because of Operation Grapes of Wrath and the Kana village tragedy, in which some 100 civilians were accidentally killed by IDF fire.

In the first two villages, Weizman was allowed to meet only notable and people who had been checked by security. But when he

reached Arrabe, he went into a large crowd of people who were shouting "Insh'Allah, let's hope there will be peace." At that point, the local imam also invited Weizman into the local mosque.

Asked by reporters about the redeployment in Hebron, Weizman skirted the issue but stressed that any agreement should please both Israel and the Palestinians. "In the long run, we'll reach agreement with the Palestinians," the president said. "Arafat is in Gaza and we are not in Ramallah or Jenin or Bethlehem. We must sit down and find the best solution for both sides now because when both sides are satisfied, life is easier afterwards. An agreement which one of the sides is not pleased with, is an opening for problems."

Two pedestrians hit by buses in Tel Aviv

TWO pedestrians were hurt in Tel Aviv in separate accidents involving Dan company buses on Monday night and yesterday morning.

An 80-year-old woman was seriously hurt when a No. 18 bus hit her as she crossed the street at a crosswalk.

She was taken to Ichilov Hospital.

A Rishon LeZion man, 27, was seriously hurt Monday night while crossing Derech Peisah Tikva by a bus traveling in the public transportation lane. He was also taken to Ichilov.

In another accident yesterday, eight people were slightly hurt when a minibus slammed into the back of a bus near the Golan Junction in Lower Galilee.

The injured were taken to Poriya Hospital near Tiberias. (AP)

SYRIA

(Continued from Page 1)

"Syria continues to use its influence to moderate Hizbullah and Palestinian rejectionist groups when tension and violence in southern Lebanon escalate. It has, however, allowed Iran to resupply Hizbullah via Damascus."

The report states that "radical terrorist groups," like the PFLP-GC, have training camps both within Syria and within "Syrian-controlled areas of Lebanon," and that groups, including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Japanese Red Army, are granted "basing privileges or refuge."

It says that Syrian officials are not directly involved in planning or carrying out terrorist acts.

It calls Iran "the premier state sponsor of international terrorism" - including such groups as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, the PFLP-GC, and the Kurdish PKK - and says it finances groups that pose a threat to Americans.

The report found that lethal attacks around the world declined in 1995, while overall acts rose from 323 to 440.

SOCIAL & PERSONAL

THE WEEKLY MEETING of the English-speaking Jerusalem Rotary Club will take place today at 1:00 p.m. at the Yeha, King David Street.

Shaul Baumann will speak on "Folkish Antisemitism," the ideological forerunner of National Socialism.

'Beirut turned out lights to fool Israel'

BEIRUT (Reuters) - Lebanon said yesterday it turned out the lights during Operation Grapes of Wrath to fool Israel into believing that it had crippled the country's electricity network for months.

Authorities in fact restored 24-hour electricity in Beirut on Sunday, a day after the 16-day operation ended, and Electricity Minister Elias Hobeika said in remarks published in newspapers yesterday that they had been ready to do so several days earlier.

Hobeika, a Christian militia intelligence chief in Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, said he exaggerated

the damage to two transformer substations near Beirut rocketed by Israeli warplanes so that Israel would not attack other power stations.

The Jambour and Bsalem substations were hit on April 14 and 15 in what Israel said were reprisal attacks for damage caused by Hizbullah rocket attacks to the power network in northern Israel.

Hobeika announced at the time that the Israeli raids had cut Lebanon's power supply to four hours a day and repairs would take more than a year and would cost up to \$80 million.

"The Israelis said they would tar-

get civil installations and we took their threats seriously," Hobeika said.

"They wanted to plunge Beirut into darkness, so we ordered municipalities to put out street lights and we imposed draconian rationing to make the Israelis think their plan had succeeded," Hobeika said.

Hobeika said EDL began "provisional" repairs immediately after the raids and power supplies were now round-the-clock in central Beirut and 18 hours daily in the suburbs. The suburbs would be fully restored in 10 days, he added.

COMPROLLER

(Continued from Page 1)

"This is one of the harshest reports ever issued," said Silvan Shalom (Likud), citing the "astronomical" number of new appointments in the Religious Affairs Ministry in particular, as well as the fact that the ministry got two appointments through the Civil Service Commission by lying about them.

Dan Tichon (Likud) also called the section on the Religious Affairs Ministry "the harshest report that has ever been published against a particular ministry and minister," but scored many other issues as well.

"With regard to traffic accidents, we, the government [and the Knesset], are shown as schleimiel. We talk a lot, but do little," he said.

Cohen, the only coalition member present, responded with a vigorous defense of the government.

"In a government that acts, there are often things that need to be fixed," he said. "This government has done more than any previous government... And considering this enormous amount of action, you are praising the government with a report like this."

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Hebron redeployment can be delayed until after elections - Barak

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

FOREIGN Minister and chairman of Prime Minister Shimon Peres's election campaign Ehud Barak said yesterday that "nothing terrible would happen if the IDF's redeployment in Hebron would be postponed until after the elections."

Speaking at a press briefing, Barak stressed that Hebron is not being evacuated of its Jewish settlers. "The army's deployment there is being changed so that the Palestinian quarters are run by the Palestinians, while the IDF's presence is being tightened around the Jewish quarters. Not a single settler is being moved out. There is no cause for concern if all this takes place after the elections," he said.

Barak said the date for the redeployment will be determined in a few days, according to the security considerations in this delicate period.

Barak said the government will be judged by its achievements, reflected in the following three events: the results of Operation Grapes of Wrath; changing the

Palestinian Covenant; and the package of military and diplomatic agreements signed with the United States.

He noted that the main goal of the diplomatic agreements is to reach international cooperation in the war against terrorism, the only real chance for defeating the terror organizations.

He added that "the results of Grapes of Wrath are intended as a way to renew the political process and peace talks with Syria and Lebanon. The quietest times on the northern border until now were when we were engaged in talks with the Syrians."

Labor campaign sources said yesterday that the campaign staff does not intend to react to Likud leader MK Binyamin Netanyahu's attacks on Peres at the Likud's election kick-off rally on Monday.

"It is inappropriate for the prime minister, especially of Peres's standing and weight, to deal with Netanyahu. It would only raise Netanyahu to a level above his station," a campaign source said.

Inquiry demanded into unequal reserve burden

COALITION Knesset faction chairman MK Ra'anan Cohen yesterday asked the chairman of the State Control Committee, Likud MK David Magen, to establish a commission of inquiry to look into the inequality in army reserve duty.

A recent check by Cohen, chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee's subcommittee on IDF manpower, revealed that about half the available pool of reservists are never called to duty, that 30% of reservists perform 80% of the duty, and that only 4.9% of reservists serve more than 31 days a year.

Cohen said this situation has serious negative social and security implications, and that everything possible must be done to change it. He added that it undermines the credibility of what was supposed to be a people's army.

He said the just-released State Comptroller's Report backed up his findings, but said there is still a need for an inquiry to get at the root of the problem and find a solution. Cohen is to meet with Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak tomorrow to discuss the matter.

(Itim)

IDF: Comptroller's recommendations being implemented

THE IDF yesterday reacted to the comptroller's report by stressing that it had already started to amend some of the faults the comptroller cited, and did not wait for the publication of the report.

Concerning reserve duty, the IDF spokesman acknowledged that the burden on combat reservists is great and that steps had already been taken to ease it. These included lowering to 45 the age reservists from these units were released, reducing to 25 days maximum reserve duty for combat reservists over 40 and improving the conditions for the unit commanders. The IDF said that it has also given reserve units an additional quota of soldiers so commanders can be more flexible when it

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

came to leaves.

The IDF Spokesman also said that steps have been taken this past year to improve motivation among reservists, but it did not specify what they were. It noted that the IDF would be conducting two surveys on motivation in the coming year, one among reserve battalion commanders and one among regular reservists.

The IDF noted that it had also set up dozens of new companies made up of regular soldiers to take over tasks which had been given to reserve combat units.

Regarding its information efforts, the IDF reacted by saying it had published a

pamphlet aimed at helping field commanders convey information to their troops. While not totally dismissing the importance of information, the IDF reacted by saying that "to its regret, battalion and company commanders were not trained in information due to the shortness of their command courses." The IDF also said that while regular soldiers needed much more information activities than reservists, officers from reserve units were welcome to use the information packages made for conscripts.

The IDF Spokesman marked with satisfaction the comptroller's reported improvements in war games and officer training.

Central Elections Committee declines to ban Yemin Yisrael

LIAT COLLINS

YEMIN Yisrael will be able to participate in the election, following a decision by the Central Elections Committee not to discuss a request by Meretz to bar the party formed by Moledeet breakaway MK Shaul Gutman and Miriam Lapid.

Meretz made its request on the grounds that some Yemin Yisrael members belonged to the outlawed Kach group and that it denied Arabs had rights and favored transfer.

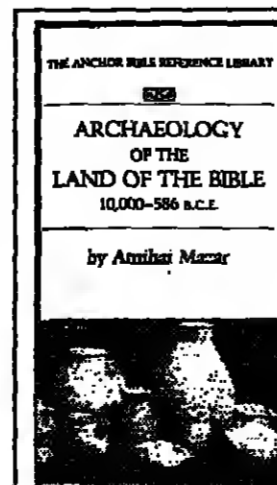
The request was rejected because it was filed two days late. Likud and National Religious Party committee members supported precluding

the discussion. Labor and Meretz members opposed the move.

The technical excuse suited the right-wing parties, which do not want to be seen as supporting a far-right party, or one to which they could lose some floating voters, but would find it awkward to support the left on a motion to ban it.

The vote was 19-14 with one abstention. There are several members of the committee who do not represent political parties.

Earlier this week, the Supreme Court ruled there was no reason to ban the party.



This volume presents a comprehensive, up-to-date overview of archaeological research in the Land of the Bible. Each period is presented against its historical and biblical background, and various aspects of the material culture are discussed. Illustrated with hundreds of line drawings, maps, photographs and charts, this book is an invaluable reference source for students and scholars, as well as for those interested in expanding their knowledge of the Bible and its world.

Published by Doubleday, hardcover, 555 pp.

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Likud: We'll use comptroller's report in our campaign

SARAH HONIG

FOLLOWING publication of the state comptroller's report, the Likud charged yesterday that "ministries have been turned into courts of Ottoman sultans, intended to serve only the master's interests."

Likud said its campaign team will make great use of the report in upcoming TV broadcasts. "Labor's promises about a clean administration and changed priorities have gone up in the thick smoke of corruption," said information drive head Limor Livnat.

Livnat said the Likud "plans to do to Labor what it did to us with the comptroller's report four years ago. That report was seen as one of the causes for the Likud's downfall, and there is no doubt - by any objective criteria - that this report is by far more damning than the 1992 one was."

Meanwhile, the Likud has demanded that the Knesset State Control Committee hold regular sessions over the next few weeks to discuss the findings. The committee chairman is Geshet's David Magen, who has already expressed readiness to call the committee into session, should the signatures

of the necessary one-third of committee members be forthcoming.

"Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet should resign immediately," MK Dan Tichon said. "The report finds that his mass political appointments were geared to serve his primary campaign interests. The comptroller hints at deceit, dishonesty, and corruption. The Transport Ministry's battle against road accidents is depicted as clumsy, at best, while money was spent liberally on aggrandizing the minister and on political appointments."

Tichon notes that "housing subsidies went where they should not have and NIS 4.3 billion earmarked for low-cost housing and infrastructure disappeared, while ministry offices became political headquarters. This is a carnival of corruption. Such a wholesale rate of political appointments is unprecedented."

MK Sylvan Shalom demanded that the comptroller prepare a report on the functioning of the Civil Service Commission, because its personnel claimed they lack the tools to check ministerial reports.

Netanyahu gets backing of two top Mideast experts

SARAH HONIG

LIKUD prime ministerial candidate Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday received the endorsement of two of the country's leading Middle East experts - Yehoshua Porat and Haim Shaked.

Both said they find it impossible to rely on Prime Minister Shimon Peres. Most recently they were appalled at what they see as the deception perpetrated on the Israeli public with the claim that the PNC amended the Palestinian Covenant.

Porat, a professor at the Hebrew University, held the 13th slot on the Meretz list for the current Knesset and was next in line to enter the House. Shaked, a professor at Tel Aviv University, has served as the TAU dean of humanities and as head of the Dayan Center for Mideastern Research.

Both met with Netanyahu yesterday morning to express their support for his candidacy. Porat said he was outraged by "this brazen attempt to dupe the public with the lie that the PNC had scrapped anti-Israel clauses from its charter."

"...The sad fact is that the PNC decided only to refer the matter to a committee and we don't so much

as know even what clauses or what number of clauses they will deal with."

Porat said that Peres, in accepting the PNC announcement at face value, was "unworthy and unreliable" to serve as prime minister. Shaked agreed that the covenant had not been annulled and added that Operation Grapes of Wrath was full of similar deception.

"Throughout history Israel avoided introducing the Europeans into our arena and now we admitted the worse of the bunch - France - with its proven ties to Syria and Iran," he said. "Hizbullah was recognized as a legitimate power and all the fire was concentrated against Iran, as if Syria were spotless. The public was not told the truth."

He noted that he and Porat also object to the manner "Peres conducts his negotiations with Syria, promising the entire Golan to Assad at the outset. I served in military intelligence at the time the Agranat Commission examined the failings of the Yom Kippur War and now I see the same entrapment in an erroneous conception."

Labor promises to snuff out cigarette smoking in election ads

JUDY SIEGEL

IS the Labor Party using subliminal advertising of cigarettes in its election campaign video films? The answer is no, according to party spokesman Yoram Dori.

Anti-smoking activists were upset to see TV Channel 1's unveiling Sunday night of the Labor Party's new jingle accompanied by a three-second close-up of a man smoking a cigarette.

Dori said that the party had provided just the jingle; Channel 1 had combined it with the footage.

But Dori said he was glad to hear the reminder. He promised to speak to Interior Minister Haim Ramon, who is responsible for the party's election propaganda on TV, to make sure that cigarettes make no appearance on campaign ads.

Ministry of Religious Affairs

Service Becomes a Tradition

Inter-dat - Internet

The Ministry of Religious Affairs is glad to announce the opening of an Internet site, devoted to religious services in Israel, and to world Jewry.

Subjects dealt with include:

- A data base on mikvaot, synagogues, and religious councils.
- Holy places.
- Religious communities throughout the world.
- Organizations and institutions.
- The bulletin of the director-general of the Ministry.

The site will be available from today, May 1, 1996 (12 Iyar 5756), the addresses being:

<http://www.religinfoserv.gov.il>
 and
<http://194.90.124.32>

It is intended to expand the matters dealt with. Inquiries on this subject can be directed to the Ministry's Information Institute and Service: Tel. 02-311012/1.

ALYN

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May 1, 1996

UN agency warns of water crisis

Over 1,000 Burundians flee into Zaire

CHRISTIAN JENNINGS
BUJUMBURA, Burundi

MORE than 1,000 Burundians fled in to eastern Zaire early yesterday after a reported Hutu rebel attack in Burundi, aid officials said. In neighboring Tanzania, a senior government official said that up to 40 Burundian Hutus were crossing into the country daily after being forced out by the Tutsi-dominated army. In another sign of increasing insecurity, the main highway linking Burundi's capital to much of the rest of the country was closed for a second day yesterday because of landmines laid by rebels. In Nairobi, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali dismissed a call in Burundi for the recall of the UN special representative, Marc Faguy. "This happened with my for-

mer representative. Every two weeks there were demands from one group that were not happy with [him]," Boutros-Ghali told a news conference. One of Burundi's main parties, the Tutsi-dominated Uprona party, accused Faguy of bias, but the UN chief said his man would stay so long as the government wanted him to. Jean-Luc Siblot, Burundi chief representative for the UN World Food Program (WFP), told Reuters that 1,600 refugees had arrived by yesterday morning at Luvungi in eastern Zaire from Cibitoke in northwest Burundi. "This is the largest number of refugees who have crossed into

Zaire since February," he added. Aid workers quoted refugees as saying they left after an attack on a military camp in Cibitoke town. Army spokesmen were not immediately available to comment on the report that a Hutu rebel attack had triggered the exodus. UNHCR estimated at the start of the year there were 110,000 Burundian refugees living in Zaire, also home to some one million Rwandan refugees who fled their country two years ago. Up to one million minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates were slaughtered in Rwanda in 1994 by Hutu militias. UN officials have repeatedly warned this year that Burundi risks being plunged into similar carnage. (Reuters)

Wealthy eccentric charged at bedside in Australian massacre

HOBART, Australia (Reuters) - Australian authorities yesterday kept tight security around the man charged in connection with the massacre of 35 people, and warned an angry, grieving local community not to seek vengeance. Australian Martin Bryant, described as a wealthy and eccentric loner, was charged at his hospital bedside with one count of murder at a tourist site in the island state of Tasmania. Police threw a security cordon around Royal Hobart Hospital and put Bryant in an isolated section, fearing revenge attacks by angry residents after the shooting spree on Sunday when in one bloody hour 32 people were killed and 19 wounded. The words "An eye for an eye!" were spray-painted on a hospital wall, and the hospital received threatening phone calls after Bryant was brought in on Monday. The massacre took place at the former penal site of Port Arthur, 50 km southeast of the Tasmanian

capital Hobart. "There has been at least one veiled threat, and this person [Bryant] may be in some danger," said Tasmanian assistant police commissioner Lippo Prins. "We are aware of the possibility of reprisal, and that's why we have taken precautions." Bryant, 28, was formally charged with murder as he lay sedated on his stomach, during a five-minute bedside court hearing attended by a court magistrate, prosecutor and a legal aid officer. He was not required to enter a plea and was remanded to appear in a local court on May 22. Bryant was being treated for burns to his back and buttocks received when fire gutted a cottage guest house on Sunday. Tasmanian Police Minister John Beswick appealed for calm as the grief and shock which engulfed the 500,000 people of this remote, southerly island turned increasingly to anger.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Auschwitz initiatives proposed
WARSAW (Reuters) - An international Auschwitz committee agreed yesterday that a controversial supermarket scheme near the former death camp should be axed, but proposed that a visitors' cafeteria should be opened on the site. News that local authorities in southern Poland had granted a developer permission to build a supermarket and fast-food restaurant in an existing building opposite the gate to the camp sparked controversy earlier this year, and the project was suspended after Poland's president and government opposed it. The five-member presidium of the international committee overseeing the Auschwitz museum, after a one-day meeting, agreed the supermarket should be scrapped. "But the committee advocated opening in the existing building just a food outlet for tourists and a shop for basic foodstuffs, souvenirs and informative literature," it said in a statement quoted by Poland's PAP news agency. It said a snack-bar and car park which have long existed on the grounds of the museum should be moved out, PAP reported.

Six more killed in India election violence
NEW DELHI (AP) - At least six people were killed in political violence as candidates ended campaigning yesterday for voting in a national election this week. Two people died yesterday in a fight with rival activists using axes, machetes and sickles in a village in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh. The deaths take to 43 the number of people killed in India since campaigning began one month ago.

16 dead in Mongolian fires
TERELZ, Mongolia (Reuters) - The Mongolian army fired rain-making shells into the sky yesterday, triggering snowfalls that halted a huge fire that has killed 16 people and threatened to engulf the capital, Ulan Bator. The snowfall extinguished the blaze just 30 km from Ulan Bator, but fires elsewhere that have devastated Mongolia's forests and pastures still raged, officials said. The fires, which have ravaged vast tracts of Mongolia's steppes, killed 11 people in recent days, raising the death toll to 16. Thirty-eight people have been seriously injured, officials said.

Sinn Fein says Adams to run in N.Irish poll
BELFAST (Reuters) - Sinn Fein, political wing of the guerrilla IRA, said yesterday that its president, Gerry Adams, would stand in Northern Ireland elections called by Britain in the run-up to June peace talks. The party ended speculation last week by announcing it would contest the May 30 poll despite charging that the vote was a British device to entrench Northern Ireland's majority Unionists, opposed to Sinn Fein's goal of a united Ireland.

Reports: Beijing bans pictures of Dalai Lama
BEIJING (AP) - Authorities in Tibet have begun banning photographs of the exiled Dalai Lama in monasteries and public places, according to reports from a monitoring group and a Tibetan newspaper. Plainclothes police went to hotels and restaurants in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital, on April 22 and 23 and ordered Tibetans to take down pictures of the Dalai Lama, the Tibet Information Network, a monitoring group based in London, said in a report yesterday. Religious Tibetans treasure photographs of the Dalai Lama, who is revered as a god-king in Tibetan Buddhism. The ban is another sign of tighter religious restrictions in Tibet. The monitoring group said it was the most confrontational step taken by Chinese authorities so far in a year-long campaign to discredit the Dalai Lama.

Latest poll: Clinton has 21-point advantage
ARLINGTON, Virginia (AP) - President Clinton has his widest lead to date over Sen. Bob Dole, according to a new USA Today/CNN/Gallup Poll. The survey in yesterday's editions of the paper said if the election were held today, Clinton would beat Dole by 21 points, 58 percent to 37 percent. The margin was 17 points in a similar poll in early April. The latest USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll, conducted last weekend, questioned of 827 registered voters. It has a margin of error of 4 percentage points.

French priest draws back in Holocaust row

PARIS (AP) - Rebuked by the church and scolded by anti-racism groups, France's most popular priest backed away yesterday from his support of a book that questioned aspects of the Holocaust. "I in no way intend to question the horrible reality of the Holocaust and the millions of Jews exterminated simply

because they were Jews," Abbe Pierre said. The statement by France's foremost defender of the poor was the latest turnaround in his position on the book by Roger Garaudy, *Founding Myths of Israeli Politics*. The book, widely condemned as revisionist, questions the numbers of Jews killed by the Nazis. It

accuses Israel of exploiting the Holocaust for political ends. After initially backing the book, published in January, Abbe Pierre last week apologized. On Monday, he wrote an editorial that again expressed his support. Yesterday, he again back-peddled. "I firmly condemn all those who for diverse reasons want to deny, falsify or render banal the

Holocaust, which will forever remain a permanent stain of shame in the history of our continent," he said. He said he was issuing the statement after a long talk with French Jewish leaders. He also retracted his earlier call for a "great debate" on aspects of the Holocaust. In Monday's editorial in the center-left newspaper *Liberation*,

Abbe Pierre declared support for elements of Garaudy's book. "What Garaudy wants is to situate the horror of these crimes committed by Hitler," Abbe Pierre wrote. "What does it matter, he says, to talk about six million [Jews]. In reality, 20 to 30 million humans were crushed" by the Nazis.

Study: Poets less depressed than writers

LONDON (Reuters) - Poets are crazier than authors or playwrights, but less likely to become depressed or alcoholics, a British psychiatrist reported yesterday. It could be because of the way their imaginations work, Dr. Felix Post, who wrote the study in the *British Journal of Psychiatry*, said. Post examined the cases of 100 famous British and American writers and poets by looking at their biographies. Many good biographies, he said, provided enough detail to do an accurate psychiatric analysis. "They've got to be really good biographies," Post, a retired psychiatric consultant, said in an interview. He found in a previous study that writers, as a group, tended to have more mental and emotional problems than other people - politicians or scientists, for example. But poets did not seem to follow the trend. "The poets were less unstable and had fewer depressions than the others." Careful analysis confirmed this: The poets, including Edgar Allan Poe and Robert Graves, had more mood swings and manic depressions requiring hospitalization.

But they were less likely than the writers, who included Ernest Hemingway and Jack London, to die young or be promiscuous. Only 31 percent of the poets were alcoholics, compared to 54 percent of playwrights. It seems writing of any sort is linked to poor mental health. Psychosis or depression was evident in 80 percent of poets, 80.5 percent of novelists and 87.5 percent of playwrights. Post said it could be down to personality differences, or the way writers and poets work. "I speculate that it is the imagination of novelists and playwrights, who are far more concerned with intimate human fate - they've got to identify and empathize with their characters," Post said. "They have greater stress in their writing." As for the poets: "They don't deal with human fate. They just describe their religious feelings or their love." Post said his study did not include women writers, as women tend to have different patterns of mental illness from men, and his study period, starting in 1840, had too few women writers.

Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael
extends heartfelt condolences to
Rachiel Rapoport
Johannesburg, South Africa
on the loss of her dear husband
SOLOMON ז"ל

To **Avi Weiss of Cleyal**
Our deep condolences on the
passing of your father
YEHUDA ז"ל
Yiftach Atir and the Evergreen Team

The Reburial in the Holy Land
of our beloved

EVA FELDENKREIS FEIG ז"ל

CLAYTON REUVEN FEIG ז"ל

will take place on Wednesday,
May 1, 1996 at 5:00 p.m.

We shall meet at the central parking area in
Givat Shaul, Jerusalem

The Family

STATE COMPTROLLER'S REPORT 1996

Well-off cash in on perks for poor

HOUSING MINISTRY

EVELYN GORDON

THE Housing Ministry's "Build Your Own Apartment" program, meant to subsidize housing for the needy, mostly subsidized the more well-off instead, State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat says in the 46th annual report.

The program was meant to consist solely of small apartments, 70-90 sq.m., which, with the aid of the subsidy, would be within the means of the needy families on the target list.

However, most of the apartments built were much bigger, and in some cases the contractors built private homes instead of apartments, the report states. In Ness Ziona, for instance, not a single one of the 197 apartments was within the designated size range: 108 were 106-120 sq.m.; 62 were 120-200 sq.m.; and 27 were 200-220 sq.m.

Furthermore, most of the apartments were built on expensive lands in the center of the country, resulting in the final price being expensive even after the subsidy, the comptroller writes.

As a result of both these factors, the apartments were often unaffordable to the target group, which was supposed to have bought 50% of the 10,000 flats. Instead, these needy families initially purchased only around 17% of the offered homes, and many of them dropped out at later stages. In Eilat, for instance, only nine of the 168 apartments were purchased by the target group, and in Ness Ziona, this group bought only 39 of the 197 apartments.

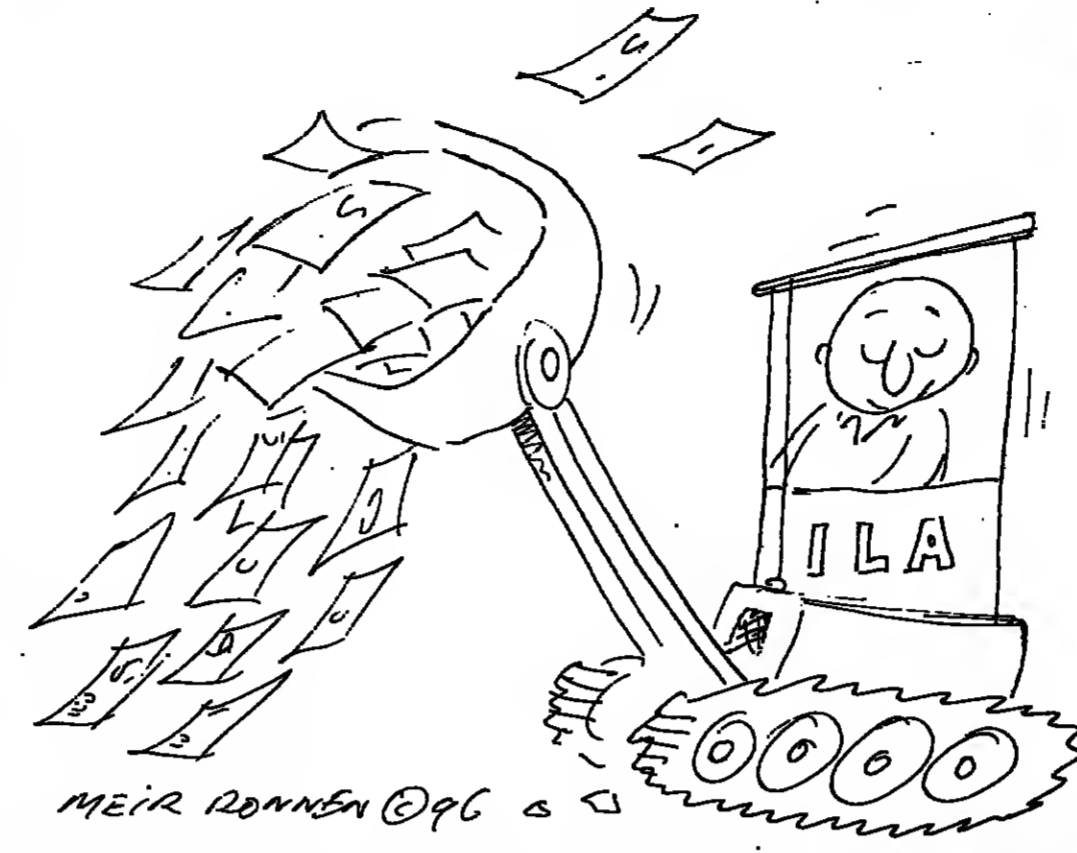
"The overall result was that the state of Israel, via the Housing Ministry and the Israel Lands Administration, gave substantial subsidies - including hidden ones - to families of whom only a small portion were among the neediest sector of the population," the comptroller says in the report.

Compounding the problem was that preference was given to people living in the town where the apartments were built. However, the locations were chosen not by where the need was greatest, but by where the ILA had available land. Therefore, many needy families who lived in nearby towns were kept out of the bidding for the apartments.

When the ministry saw that it was not meeting its 50% goal, the report says, it began granting additional subsidies and adding more people to the target group. However, it did this without the approval of the Israel Lands Council, which was supposed to approve all changes to the program.

Another flaw in the program, the report says, was that the subsidy was set as a percentage of the price of the land rather than as a fixed amount. This meant that the ministry had no control over the size of the subsidy. It also meant that people who bought in the center of the country, where land is expensive, received a much greater subsidy than those in the periphery.

The state comptroller says the ministry never considered the alternative of simply giving a mortgage subsidy, which might have



been better in three ways: It would have been the same amount for everyone, the ministry would have known how much it was committing to in advance, and it would have allowed buyers to purchase wherever they found an appropriate home, instead of in fixed locations.

But even if the program had worked as planned, the report notes, it would have solved only part of the problem, since the number of people in the ministry's target group was much larger than the number of apartments built.

Another problem, the report says, was that the ILA charged builders only for the amount of land they actually built upon, and often even less. In Eilat and Rosh Ha'ayin, for instance, the builders added huge gardens to the houses - in some cases reaching 290 sq.m. - and thereby received the land for free. Thus, the 88 private homes which were built in Rosh Ha'ayin in defiance of the project guidelines received free land worth some NIS 8.8 million, or NIS 100,000 per house. The buyers received 173 sq.m. of land apiece, with 138-square-meter houses, for the price of 81 sq.m.

According to the report, numerous other unofficial subsidies were given to the project as well. In Eilat, for instance, the ILA charged for only two-thirds of the 21,840 sq.m. it allotted to the project, costing the state NIS 6.8m., or NIS 40,000 per apartment. Undervaluation of the land brought the subsidy to NIS 11.8m., or NIS 70,000 per apartment. Subsidies for other items, such as bomb shelters that were not built, raised the total even further, to NIS 108,000 per apartment. And all this was before the subsidy which the ministry officially gave.

Not so intensive care

HEALTH MINISTRY

JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

ANYONE due to enter a hospital is best advised not to read the State Comptroller's Report's chapter on the 50-odd pages may raise blood pressure and induce fear of undergoing surgery or eating hospital food.

The State Comptroller's Report certainly does not increase public confidence in the Health Ministry's ability to supervise medical services and ensure the best health care for all.

The most disturbing section of the report is on intensive care units. These highly expensive facilities are meant for patients in life-threatening conditions who need round-the-clock monitoring and expert nursing and medical care.

The comptroller conducted a four-month study of intensive care units in eight general hospitals: Tel Hashomer's Sheba, Rebecca Sieff in Safed (government hospitals); Tel Aviv's Ichilov, Haifa's Bnai Zion (state-municipal); Beilinson in Petah Tikva, Ha'emek in Afula, Haifa's Carmel (Kupat Holim Clalit); and Jerusalem's Shear Zedek (a voluntary public hospital).

Although getting a bed in an intensive-care unit can mean the difference between life and death for a seriously ill patient, the ministry has not set standards for the number of intensive-care beds required in each hospital.

The cost of treating a patient in these units is an estimated \$858 to \$1,350 per day, but the ministry has set the health fund's payment at only \$265 per diem. As a result, the hospitals have no financial incentive to put patients in intensive-care beds. With too little room, the hospitals send many patients to ordinary departments, where equipment is not as sophisticated and nurses are not at the bedside 24 hours a day.

The comptroller found that on an average day, when eight patients were in Ichilov's intensive-care unit, 13 others, needing intensive care, were in other departments. Corresponding figures for Sheba were 10/10; Beilinson 8/8, and Carmel 6/7. In many cases, elderly patients, people with chronic respiratory diseases, and terminal cancer patients are the ones selected for beds in other departments even though they need intensive care, the report says.

If they are sent to less-than-optimum departments, at least a doctor from the intensive-care unit should visit the patient from time to time to issue instructions, the comptroller says.

But the Health Ministry has neglected to set down such requirements, and if such specialists do visit, it is usually when the patient's condition deteriorates and the department doctor calls them in, the report says.

Some senior doctors suggested the establishment of "intermediate care" units to treat patients who need more than ordinary hospital departments but less than intensive care; this would save money, they argued. However, others said the amount saved would be minimal, and that when intensive care was medically required, no compromise should be made.

were dealt with only when they broke down.

Infections can easily spread from patient to patient, but the ministry did not set down binding rules on how often tubes and masks connecting the patient to the respirator must be replaced, the report says. In some hospitals, this was done once a day, while in others it was done twice a week. A standard must be set and replacement of equipment must be put down in writing, the comptroller writes.

HEALTH Minister Ephraim Sneh and some of his predecessors have significantly expanded the number of hospitals permitted to perform heart surgery. In 1989, only seven hospitals were allowed to do this complicated surgery, while today there are 16.

Due to the great expansion of facilities and improved non-surgical care for cardiac patients, occupancy in these surgical departments has dropped to an average of 80 percent. The occupancy rate in some smaller hospitals ranges from 19% to 59%. Experts have noted that when the patient load drops below a critical mass, surgical teams have less experience and practice and the success rate may drop.

In October 1995, Sneh approved the opening of an 11-bed cardiac-surgery department at Meir Hospital in Kfar Sava. But the ministry did not appoint a professional committee to investigate whether there was a need for this 11th department, the report says. The ministry told the comptroller it had documentation examining the need for another cardiac-surgery unit, but these alleged documents were never provided to the comptroller.

DOCTORS in government hospitals are not supposed to do private work without receiving explicit permission from management after meeting strict criteria. In Clalit hospitals, rules on the books bar all outside work. However, the comptroller found that these regulations are violated regularly in both types of hospitals.

At Holon's Wolfson Hospital (government), for example, four surgeons did private work without even asking for permission, the report says. At Tel Hashomer's Sheba Hospital (government) seven surgeons moonlighted without seeking authorization.

Civil service doctors bar public hospital doctors from earning more than 50% of their regular salary from private work. But in practice, many earned between 166% and 464% of their hospital salaries from private work, the report says.

Doctors perform long operations in private institutions after long hours of operating in their own hospitals, but the ministry does not instruct hospital managements on limits so patients will not be hurt, the comptroller says.

Duty rota schedules are also mishandled. It was found that a surgeon was on duty at Beilinson in Petah Tikva and Kaplan in Rehovot at the same time, even though the hospitals are 30 kilometers apart and reaching one from the other quickly is impossible.

ON THE issue of mammography, the comptroller criticizes the ministry for failing to institute a mass screening program of women over age 50. In other countries, such programs - in which women are personally invited for a breast X-ray - have reduced mortality from breast cancer by 30%. Last September, the ministry said it would launch such a program, but nothing has happened since then, the comptroller notes.

The comptroller's investigation of food preparation in the hospitals found many shortcomings in its preparation, storage and defrosting. Some of these problems caused harm to the health of patients, the comptroller states.

Many kitchens need renovation, and many institutions - especially geriatric and psychiatric hospitals - lack enough qualified dietitians to ensure that patients are getting the nutrients they need.

Contractors owe NIS 3.8b. in infrastructure work

HOUSING MINISTRY

EVELYN GORDON

THE Housing Ministry recouped only NIS 747 million of the NIS 4.5 billion it spent on infrastructure for private projects in 1990-94, leaving it in the hole to the tune of some NIS 3.8b., according to the state comptroller.

Some of this gap was due to ministry decisions to subsidize the development work. However, much of the gap was due to the fact that the ministry charged contractors much less than it actually spent on the work. It also frequently failed to collect even those sums it did charge, the report says.

Because of the ministry's failure to keep records on each project individually, however, it is impossible to determine what portion of the gap is due to each of these factors, the comptroller adds.

The report notes that instead of charging contractors for the actual cost of development work, the ministry set its rates according to a table which often bore no connection to reality.

Furthermore, it allowed contractors to pay in installments, without obtaining any security for future payments. As a result, the ministry's records show that contractors currently owe it some NIS 67m. However, the report says, the real total is probably much higher, because many contractors were never even billed for work done between 1989 and 1995. Only in 1995 did the ministry hire an outside consultant to try to track down these unrecorded debts.

The ministry has not taken the necessary steps to collect even its known debts, the report continues. It has even continued to award new contracts to defaulting contractors.

The ministry also failed to make legal arrangements in advance which would require private landowners to participate in development costs for a new neighborhood in Beit Shemesh. As a result, the ministry had to swallow these costs, which totaled some NIS 34m. to NIS 38m.

Furthermore, it made no allowances for the unexpected costs that are part of every devel-

opment project. In one Eilat project, for instance, this has so far cost the ministry NIS 3.7m., and the total will rise to NIS 17.6m. if the overruns continue at the same rate.

Finally, the ministry sometimes gave subsidies to ineligible projects. For instance, it decided to subsidize 50% of the development for apartments in the "Build Your Own Home" project, but not for private homes. In practice, however, it gave the subsidies to private homes as well, to the tune of NIS 15m. in 1994-95.

In 1993, the Housing and Finance ministries jointly agreed that this system needed to be changed: Contractors should pay the full cost of the development; records should be kept on each project individually; and development work should start being contracted out to the private sector. However, these decision were never implemented, the report says.

State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat therefore strongly recommends that the ministry implement these decisions and privatize development work.

"Doing development work and collecting payment for it is not necessarily part of the [ministry's] job - particularly when the ministry performs these tasks with the inefficiency described above," the report concludes.

Another serious problem discovered by the comptroller is that the ministry permitted Eilat to collect fees from contractors for development work done by the ministry. The contractors therefore paid twice for these portions of the work, while Eilat got money for nothing - which, according to previous Supreme Court decisions, is illegal.

Finally, the comptroller writes, the ministry and the Israel Lands Administration failed to coordinate policy, with discriminatory results: Contractors on projects managed by the ILA had to pay 65% of the costs of intercity roads serving these projects, but contractors on projects managed by the ministry did not. The comptroller stressed that the two bodies must develop a unified policy on this issue.

Land assessments cost state NIS 1b.

JUSTICE MINISTRY

EVELYN GORDON

THE Justice Ministry's undervaluations of land have cost the state hundreds of millions of shekels each year, the state comptroller says.

The ministry is responsible for the government's land assessment department, whose assessments are used by the Israel Lands Administration to determine the price it will demand for land not sold by public tender.

However, the comptroller found that from 1991-1994, the department's valuations averaged 63% below the market value of the land. In some cases, the differential was as great as 200%.

The comptroller compares the department's assessments with the prices actually obtained when the land was sold via public tender, and found that the assessments undervalued the land by about NIS 1 billion over the four-year period.

The comptroller's report notes that the worst undervaluations occurred with respect to land sold for industrial use. In 1994, for instance, the average gap be-

tween the department's assessments and market prices was 160.7%. However, since about three-quarters of the ILA's revenue derives from land sold for residential construction, the average gap in this area - 84% - is even more significant.

The report finds that the main reason for the undervaluations was that the department took no notice of external factors that might affect the price of the land, such as supply and demand. The department bases its assessments mainly on the price obtained in similar sales in the past, without taking into account the changes in land prices since that time.

"When assessments are based on past sales, it would be appropriate for the department to consider adding an estimate of how much this assessment should be changed in light of the factors

that have influenced the real estate market in the interim," the state comptroller writes.

Another problem, the report says, is that the department updates its assessments according to the Consumer Price Index rather than the Housing Index, even though the latter is much more reflective of changing land prices.

To solve all these problems, the comptroller suggests that the government reconsider the department's role, and whether government bodies should really be required to let the department perform all their assessments. It might be better to let private assessors do the work, and reduce the department to a supervisory role, the comptroller says.

At the very least, two assessments should be done for every piece of land, to try to provide some kind of a check.

Finally, the report says, the ILA should try to increase the amount of land it sells via public tender, since this is the best way to ensure that it obtains full value for the land.

A license to err

IBA

LIAT COLLINS

EVEN if you don't own a television, you might be visited by members of the IBA's licensing division with a warning to pay for a license. On the other hand, even if you have had a set for years, the licensing division might never bother to demand you pay the fees.

The comptroller examined the work of the licensing division in its Jerusalem headquarters and five branches, paying particular attention to Upper Nazareth where it determines the office's work is so negligent that at least one worker could be subject to criminal proceedings. The noteworthy problems discovered there include false reports of payments; cash payments which were not paid into the bank; no report books on confiscated equipment; and confiscations carried out without the necessary procedure.

The comptroller's report finds particularly lax enforcement of television licensing requirements among the non-Jewish sector.

In many cases, however, the licensing office sent demands to households which did not possess a television at all. The demands often included a warning that the set would be confiscated and fines and interest levied as if the head of the household had owned a set for the past six years. In some cases, even after a visit showed that the home did not

have a set, the computer was updated only months later.

The department has no set regulations on the training and requirements of its enforcement officers and such workers are chosen arbitrarily without consideration of their suitability.

The enforcement officers entered homes without updated information on the accounts or any arrangements reached by the owners and the authorities "thus bothering citizens who had already paid their debts or reached an installment arrangement." In Upper Nazareth, enforcement officers confiscated equipment despite only having a final demand or warrants without the necessary signatures.

The lack of proper records on confiscated equipment in Upper Nazareth meant the office could not keep track of payments to a private subcontractor who stored the goods. There was not even a written contract between this company and the IBA.

Some 38% of the items sold in the 11 public auctions the comptroller checked fetched a price of up to NIS 400, which barely covered the cost of the annual license fee for the same year. Even after their television sets were auc-

tioned off, many owners were left with a debt of between NIS 1,000 and NIS 3,000. Many of them did not settle this debt.

The licensing office maintains a list of "potential debtors" from data it receives from the Interior Ministry. This list includes singles above age 18; newlyweds; widows and widowers; and the newly divorced. In order to increase the number of television owners who pay the fee, notices are sent to the potential owners telling them of their obligation to inform the licensing division if they own a television set in a household which does not have a license.

Enforcement officers are then sent to homes to check up on the information. In Upper Nazareth, the local branch sent final warnings to these potential owners without ascertaining that the homes had a set.

In many cases, two or even three policemen accompany the IBA official to homes where sets are to be confiscated. This makes the procedure more expensive for the IBA and more traumatic for the owner.

However, under its criticism of the laxity in enforcing the fee collection, the comptroller's office notes in a large percentage of cases the IBA officers went to homes at times when the owners were likely to be out, making the procedure a costly waste of time.

100150

Unresolved problem of foreign labor

Overstaffed ministry, overpaid councils

RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

HERB KEINON

LABOR MINISTRY
EVELYN GORDON

THOUGH the number of foreign workers in Israel has jumped dramatically in recent years, the Labor and Social Affairs Ministry has made no plans to deal with the long-term problems posed by these workers, the State Comptroller's Report says.

The report notes that there were 72,000 legally employed foreign workers in 1995, compared with only 2,000 in 1985, 4,000 in 1989 and 6,000 in 1993. In addition, the number of illegal foreign workers last year is estimated at 100,000. The sudden jump in the number of foreign workers is due largely to the need to replace workers from the territories, especially in the construction and agriculture sectors.

In her report, State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat notes that foreign workers can serve an important short-term purpose by filling temporary shortages of trained manpower. However, she says, there are several long-term disadvantages to a reliance on cheap foreign labor.

First, it retards the introduction of new technology and efficiency measures by making the economic need for them less apparent, and thereby increases the economy's reliance on labor-intensive rather than technology-intensive industries.

Second, it lowers wages and worsens working conditions, thereby reducing the incentive for Israeli unemployed to take jobs in these fields, and reducing the incentive for employers to try to train more expensive Israeli workers. This hurts lower-class Israelis in particular, since they are the ones who would otherwise fill these jobs. However, it also hurts the economy as a whole, the report notes, both because the government must continue to pay unemployment to the Israelis and because the foreign workers generally spend only a small portion of their wages in Israel.

Finally, large numbers of foreign workers can create serious social problems, as has happened in many European countries, the report says. This is already happening in Israel. In 1994, the Employment Service's foreign workers division said there were areas of Tel Aviv where many foreign workers lived that had become magnets for the Israeli criminal element.

"All of this necessitates an examination of the short-term versus long-term considerations and the establishment of a long-term policy relating to foreign workers," the report says.

While the government does periodically reconsider how many permits it should grant, "this is not, in the opinion of the state comptroller, a substitute for an overall plan to create conditions that would encourage the replacement of foreign workers with Israelis," it says.

In the building sector, contractors have claimed that Israelis still did not want the jobs even after they raised wages. However, the Employment Service found that in fact, contractors had not raised their wages at all, the report notes.

Neither the Employment Service nor the Interior Ministry made any attempt to keep tabs on workers whose permits had expired, the report continues. They did not even contact employers when the permits expired to ask whether the worker had left the country.

Furthermore, employers are rarely either prosecuted or fined when illegal workers are discovered, and even when they are fined, the fines are rarely collected. Between January 1994 and May 1995, for instance, 2,347 fines worth NIS 11.44 million were levied, but only 725, worth NIS 2.67m., were collected. As a result, there is little incentive for employers to obey the law, the comptroller says.

Finally, the report notes, many foreign workers live in very poor conditions. However, only in 1995 did the Labor Ministry even begin to try to supervise living conditions for foreign workers. At that point, it discovered that 75% of the workers checked were living in unacceptable conditions. However, only in three cases did the ministry cancel the employers' permits to employ foreign workers; in most cases, the employers were not punished at all.

THE Ministry of Religious Affairs always seems to take up a big slice of the comptroller's report, and this year is no exception. The 61-page section deals with irregularities in everything from too many advisers to the minister, inflated salaries for religious council heads, and an inequality in the distribution of funds to the country's Moslem sector.

The most damning findings relate to the local religious councils, established to provide religious services to the country's Jewish population, such as kashrut supervision, marriage, *eruvim*, *mikvaot*, and rabbinical services.

"The ministry did not appropriately fulfill its functions in a number of areas regarding the religious councils," the report says.

The comptroller finds that although the ministry was legally obliged to form religious councils based on the results of the last municipal elections some six months after the elections, in the vast majority of cases it has not yet done so.

By November 1995, two years after the last municipal elections, new religious councils had only been formed in 13 of 170 localities. "Differences of opinion regarding the compatibility of the candidates for the job, especially against the background of their political or religious [stream] affiliation, is holding up the establishment of the councils," the comptroller writes.

The report also uncovers "very grave deficiencies" in the council's budgetary processes. The comptroller says the ministry did not approve an overall budget for the councils for 1994-1995 and, as a result, did not determine the ministry's contribution to that budget.

According to law, the ministry is to approve a budget for the council, and will then contribute 40 percent of the funds, with the local council providing the rest. The comptroller takes the ministry to task for allowing the councils to present to local municipalities larger budgets in order to get more money.

Regarding the number of paid



positions in the religious councils, the comptroller writes that this number does not reflect real needs of the councils, but is "to a large degree the result of historical developments."

In addition, the comptroller found that the salaries of the heads of the religious councils, and some of their deputies, are in many cases close to that of government ministers, and are higher than stipulated in ministry regulations. In Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and Haifa religious council heads earn NIS 256,000 a year, 97 percent of the salary earned by a minister. In other cities of 100,000 residents or more, the figure is 92 percent of ministerial salaries, or NIS 248,000 a year.

In characteristic understatement, the comptroller writes, "It is reasonable to assume that the weight of responsibility on ministers is inestimably greater than that placed on the local council heads and their deputies. There is no justification for linking the salaries of the local council heads - and as a result their deputies - in such a large degree to the wages of ministers."

Not only does the comptroller suggest drastically cutting the salaries of deputy council heads, but also of doing away with these paid positions altogether, except in the country's three largest cities.

The comptroller points out that the recommendations of the Tza-

dok Committee, set up in 1992 to recommend changes in the functioning of the religious councils, were never implemented. In light of the committee's findings, the comptroller writes, the Ministry of Religious Affairs should carry out a general evaluation of the functioning of the religious councils, the services they provide, their budgetary process and manpower needs.

MANPOWER irregularities were also the main fault the comptroller found with Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetret, though he is never mentioned by name.

Shetret was appointed to the post in February 1995, and from

then until December 1995 he enlisted 20 advisers and workers on special contracts, and appointed another 24 external advisers. Three of these workers had the necessary approval from the state's civil service apparatus.

"When the minister began his job, he decided to institute wide-ranging reforms in a variety of different areas," the comptroller writes. "Since according to the ministry it was impossible to carry out these reforms with the existing staff, the office began enlisting workers, some of them on special contracts, and some of them on agreements for services rendered, and others through employment agencies."

According to the comptroller,

the office - in enlisting new workers - did not always follow norms of good management. The comptroller writes that in two cases there is suspicion that the workers were appointed because they were Labor Party activists.

"As we have pointed out in the past, the plague of political or personal appointments causes serious harm to the public's faith" in government, the comptroller notes. She adds that in order to retain the public's faith, public officials must be strict in carefully carrying out all the regulations regarding job appointments.

REGARDING services provided to the country's Moslem sector - 14.3 percent of the population - the report says their funding falls short of the amount their numbers warrant.

"The comptroller's office is of the opinion," the report reads, "that the Ministry of Religious Affairs should work toward greater equality between the two sectors [Jewish and Moslem], and ensure that the funds allocated to the Moslems fit their representation in the overall population."

The comptroller also says there are "irregularities in the way Moslem religious functionaries are hired and paid." Money earmarked for renovations of Moslem holy sites comes late, and is not allocated according to any set criteria, it adds.

In addition, the report also says there were serious irregularities in the functioning of the Moslem religious courts, of which there are seven district courts in the country, and one court of appeals.

"Despite the importance of these courts in the life of Moslems in the country, there are irregularities in the functioning of the courts in almost all the areas that were checked."

"These courts," the comptroller writes, "do not have the status they deserve."

The courts are not fully manned, and the ministry has not carried out a study to determine "the minimal number of people needed to effectively serve the public." In addition, the report says that "some of the buildings of the court are neglected and not suited for their purpose, which harms the courts' ability to function."

Protected housing centers for elderly poorly supervised

LABOR MINISTRY

EVELYN GORDON

THE Labor and Social Affairs Ministry is negligent in its supervision of protected housing centers for the elderly, the State Comptroller's Report asserts.

First, the report notes, current ministry regulations require a license only for programs housing at least 13 people. Smaller centers, therefore, go completely unsupervised.

However, the ministry is very lax about licensing even institutions that do contain 13 or more people, the report says. In 1995, for instance, the ministry had 226 centers registered, of which it had decided to close 32. Of the remaining 194, 64 percent, or 124, were operating without a license. Of these, 56 had never been licensed.

Regarding the 32 institutions the ministry decided to close, the report examined the 25 that were in the Tel Aviv area. However, legal proceedings to effect the closure were initiated by the ministry against only 10 of these centers, the report says.

Not only did the ministry fail to act against unlicensed institutions, it even referred elderly people to eight centers whose licenses had long since lapsed, it adds.

The state comptroller also found 46 centers whose residents were in need of nursing care which were left unsupervised because they were in bureaucratic limbo between the Labor and Health ministries.

Private eyes get away with wiretapping

JUSTICE MINISTRY

EVELYN GORDON

PRIVATE investigators who wiretap or commit other crimes against personal privacy are not punished by the Justice Ministry's disciplinary committee, according to the State Comptroller's Report.

The ministry's licensing committee for private investigators filed 12 complaints with the disciplinary committee between 1991 and 1995. However, the disciplinary committee did not suspend the investigator's license in any of these cases, even when the investigators were found guilty of wiretapping or invasion of privacy, the report says.

Furthermore, nine of these disciplinary cases dragged on for months, or even years, after the investigator had already been convicted in court. The combination of the light penalties imposed by the committee and the length of time that passed before a decision was reached severely

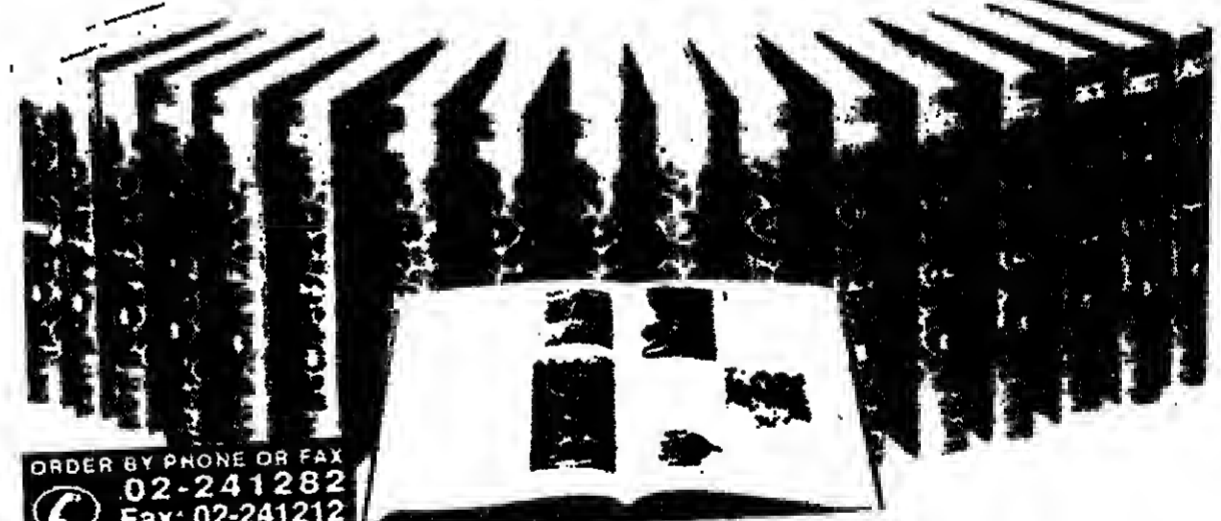
undermined the deterrent power of these proceedings, the comptroller says in the report.

The report also blasts the police's inactivity in the field of invasions of privacy, noting that only after the press focused attention on wiretapping in 1994 did the police begin devoting attention to this area. Although police files were opened against 79 investigators between 1986 and 1995, in all but four cases the investigations had still not been finished as of 1995.

"In the comptroller's opinion, the Justice Ministry and the police must act with greater energy against invasions of privacy," the report states.

It might also be wise, it adds, to expand the number of cases in which the courts are allowed to suspend a private investigator's license, thereby reducing the need for the disciplinary committee to get involved.

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Jobs for the boys

BUILDING CENTER
BILL HUTMAN

THE chairman of the board of directors, director-general, and deputy director-general of the Israel Building Center were all appointed primarily due to their membership in the Labor Party, and not because they were professionally suited for the positions, the state comptroller asserts her report.

"Such a collection of senior officials with connections to the minister's party, in a body that carries out such little activity like the Building Center, is not reasonable and proper, and points to the appointments resulting from the officials' political affiliations," the comptroller writes.

The report on the Israel Building Center covers the periods from 1990 to 1994, but centers on the period when the building center was under the control of the Labor-Meretz government, and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer of the Labor Party in particular.

The comptroller blasts the political appointments, as well as the Building Center itself, saying it is unclear why the state-run organization was not disbanded.

In 1992, the comptroller issued a report uncovering political appointments in the building center under the previous Likud government.

The latest report is particularly critical of the appointment in April 1994 of a new chairman of the board, noting that he was a member of the Labor Party's central committee and bureau. From 1991 to the summer of 1993 the center had no permanent chairman of the board.

Ben-Eliezer appointed the former chairman of the Jewish National Fund to head the center's board in July, 1993, although the board itself was not informed of this decision until March the next year, the report says.

The finance minister also never approved the appointment. The present chairman of the board, however, received the approval of both the ministers and the board members.

The Building Center director-general is also a Labor Party central committee member, who worked as an official at Na'amat before her appointment in February last year. Her predecessor at the center quit after less than a year, because of an internal company squabble.

The company secretary was appointed by the former director-general, without the board's approval, in May 1993. The next month, when the issue of the secretary's salary was brought up at the center's finance committee, it was never reported that the position was already filled.

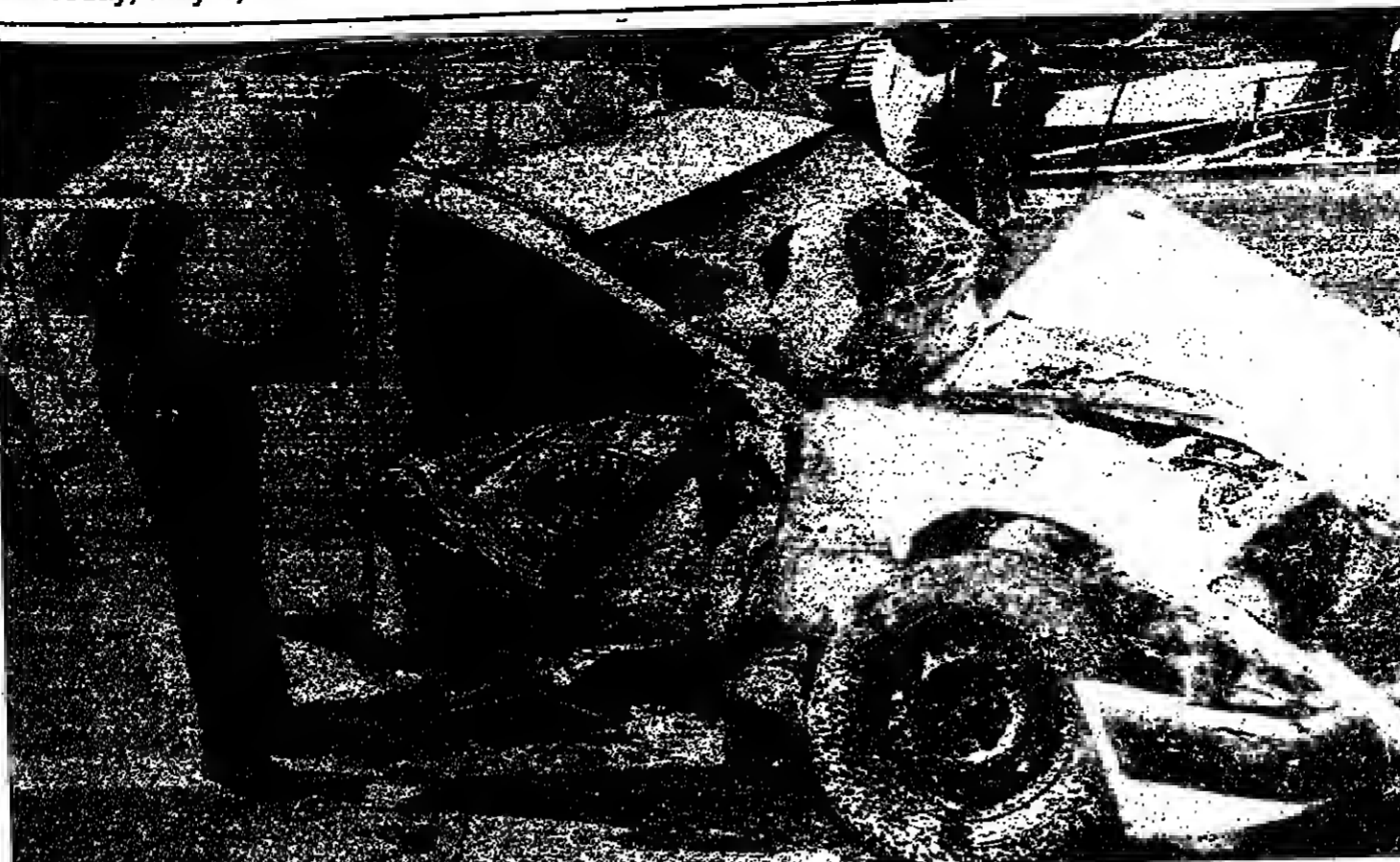
The comptroller notes that the company secretary "only had a high school education. It was found that the company secretary was a member of the Labor Party central committee." Her salary was 50 percent of the director-general's.

"Because of a conflict between her and the director-general, the board of directors in December 1993 decided to fire her, effective immediately," the comptroller states. The cost of her salary for about six months work was about NIS 70,000.

The comptroller found that the present deputy director-general is also a Labor Party member, having served as the Na'amat director in Jerusalem. Her previous work experience did not qualify her for the post, according to the report.

The report also details the decreasing activity of the building center between 1990 and 1994, coinciding with a sharp increase in the company's deficit, part of which was covered by the Housing Ministry.

Income, largely from exhibitions organized by the Building Center, dropped some 60 percent from 1993 to 1994, following a smaller drop in revenue the previous years. Between 1990 and 1993 salaries made up 36% to 38% of revenue, compared with 70% in 1994.



The death toll from traffic accidents since the founding of the state is 18,700

(Ariel Jerozolimski)

One guiding hand needed to control accident prevention

ROAD SAFETY

JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

THE death toll from traffic accidents since the founding of the state is 18,700 - some 500 fewer victims than those from all of Israel's wars. Despite political efforts to end such wars, too little has been done to blunt the toll of Israelis vs. Israelis on the roads, the state comptroller says.

The comptroller reviews efforts to improve road safety that are the shared responsibility of a number of authorities. These include the Transport Ministry and its Road Safety Administration (RSA), the Israel Police, Public Works Department (PWD) in the Ministry of Construction and Housing, the Education Ministry, the Health Ministry and a number of voluntary groups such as the National Council for Accident Prevention.

The report concludes that their efforts have been inadequate, and are probably even misdirected, as building more roads "only increases the use of private vehicles at the expense of public transport and further boosts traffic and accidents."

The comptroller, looking at the statistics and findings of her investigators, notes that previous comptroller reports dealt with these issues. This, she says, requires the government to make "a special effort, and immediately to correct the shortcomings and concentrate accident-prevention efforts in a single body, in order to plan, initiate and coordinate their implementation." This body must act as quickly as possible and include the highest level of professionals in the field, the comptroller says.

Money thrown away in garbage disposal plan

PORTS and RAILWAYS AUTHORITY

LIAT COLLINS

ALTHOUGH not one local authority has signed an agreement to use trains to transport its garbage to central landfills, the Ports and Railways Authority has spent nearly a million shekels on suitable equipment that remains idle, the comptroller says.

The authority had discussed the possibility of garbage transport by rail since 1988, but the idea received a boost in 1993 when the government decided to close the small garbage dumps around the country and develop instead central, supervised landfills at five major sites. The authority's assessment is that rail transport is cheaper than trucks, particularly for longer distances.

Between 1991 and 1992, it bought 20 containers suitable for garbage transport and 12 flatwagons which carry the containers. The cost was some NIS 800,000. NIS 370,000 of this was for the containers which are not suitable for transporting anything other than waste. Consequently, they have not yet been used.

The authority decided to use the flatwagons, which had also been sidelined since purchase, for transporting salt, and in 1992 purchased 14 suitable containers at a cost of NIS 230,000, the report notes. The purchase was not budgeted for, no tender was issued, and no contract signed. The deal was authorized retroactively by the authority director, who noted it deviated from normal procedure, the comptroller writes.

At the end of 1992, the authority paid NIS 29,000 to the importer of the garbage containers, at his request, to supervise the local production of salt containers, but no documented evidence exists that he did in fact oversee the process, the report says.

In October 1994, the steering committee on the rail garbage transport idea decided to promote a three-year trial program, but the decision was not implemented. The same month, the authority signed a declaration of intent with a private company concerning the garbage transport, but the contract was drawn up without legal advice or a detailed business plan and did not clearly determine how the partners would divide up the financing of equipment, according to the comptroller.

The next day, the authority began the process of purchasing another \$200,000 worth of equipment, although no local authority had yet signed an agreement to implement the plan, the report states.

In June 1995, the Netanya Municipality issued a tender for transport of its waste to Ashdod but the authority was unable to participate because of its previous negotiations on the subject. It therefore missed an opportunity to transport 250 tons of the 800 tons of waste it had planned to carry daily as part of the trial program.

Regarding education, although the government decided in 1993 that lessons on road safety would become mandatory, by the current school year, 550,000 of the 1.2 million children in kindergarten to 12th grade received no such lessons. In addition, studying the theoretical part of drivers' education courses was to have become required learning in 11th grade, but only 64% studied it this year, and of those, only 40% passed the theoretical exam. Thus, only about a quarter of 11th graders passed these tests.

The Israel Traffic Police was established to increase enforcement of traffic laws, but the number of tickets handed out in 1994 was lower than that in 1993, even though the number of violations certainly did not decline, the report says. The number of drivers' licenses revoked due to serious violations also decreased, and some tickets were canceled because of missing information or failure to present the cases in court on time.

Although the number of road accidents in the Arab sector is considerably higher than in the Jewish sector, due to poor road conditions and inadequate driver education, little has been done in this field, the comptroller states.

Trucks carrying surplus freight cause many accidents, but the maximum weight permitted here is 8.8% to 25% higher than the limits in 28 European countries, the report notes. In a check, 17%

Unfair spread of reserve duty

IDF

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

RESERVE duty is not being meted out fairly and the IDF is not doing enough to close the growing gap between reservists from combat units and auxiliary units, according to the state comptroller.

This, the comptroller says, has reduced morale and compounded the burgeoning phenomenon against serving in the reserves altogether.

Even though the IDF has cut the number of annual reserve days, motivation to serve has plummeted, the report notes. The IDF, aware of the problem, has dealt with it by calling up twice the number of reservists as needed, instead of trying to increase motivation by equally dividing the burden, the report says.

"The IDF needs to make a lot of changes in operating the reserves," the report says. "The method of dividing the burden of reserves has great public, social and economic impact and directly affects the level of readiness to serve in reserves."

According to the report, the phenomenon of unfair division of the reserve burden is growing. This is most prevalent in the burden of service among combat units.

The comptroller says that since the tasks given to combat reservists cannot be carried out by other reservists, the former should be compensated.

Lack of motivation is making it difficult for the army to call up enough reservists, particularly for service in Judea, Samaria and the

Gaza Strip. The report notes that the army compensated by calling up three combat reservists for every two needed. In non-combat units the figure was dramatically higher with 10 soldiers called up for every two positions. Even then, regular troops were sometimes called to make up the missing slots.

"There is a feeling of social legitimacy given in the phenomenon of getting out of reserve duty and a sense of being a 'sucker' for those who do serve," the report says.

The report notes that the number of reservists who were AWOL grew by 54 percent between 1992 and 1995 and that desertions increased by 14%. It says the IDF treatment of this problem is not satisfactory.

The comptroller recommends that the army make a more serious attempt to bring back those reservists who have avoided duty. Among combat units this is about 20% and in support units it reaches as high as 40%, the report says.

The report also notes that the IDF did not adequately train reservists due to bad planning and coordination between units and lack of equipment.

The IDF also suffers from an inadequate number of doctors and medics, which puts a greater burden on those reservists, the report says. But it notes the IDF is compensating with immigrant doctors and internists. The army, however, has no plan to meet the need for medics, the report notes.

Civil Guard volunteers lack proper training

CIVIL GUARD

BILL HUTMAN

THIRTY-FOUR percent of Civil Guard volunteers questioned by the comptroller had not trained at a shooting range for over two years. The comptroller also found that police failed to check whether volunteers have psychiatric histories that forbid them from using weapons.

Last year, the comptroller's office visited 188 of the nation's 317 Civil Guard bases, and gave questionnaires to over 15,000 of the Civil Guard's 50,000 volunteers.

The report notes the importance of the Civil Guard, founded in 1974, in providing police with additional manpower for a wide range of tasks, from routine patrols to helping in the national police crime lab.

The comptroller says, however, that Civil Guard volunteers are not being properly trained and its manpower not effectively used. There is also a high dropout rate, with many volunteers leaving after less than a year of service.

"The responsibilities, rights, and obligations of Civil Guard volunteers on duty are the same as those of policemen," notes the chapter in the section on the Ministry of Internal Security. "Volunteers are supposed to be permitted to serve only after undergoing basic weapons training," but some are not getting such training.

The volunteers' commanders in many cases have also not received the proper training. "From a review of the personnel files of 30 commanders [of volunteer training bases], it turns out 14 did not receive training for the position until half a year or more after starting work."

The comptroller notes that the Interior Ministry checks whether a person has a psychiatric record before granting a gun license. Police examine whether Civil Guard volunteers have criminal records, but because of bureaucratic problems don't check their psychiatric records, the report notes.

Don't shoot the messenger, blame the management

POSTAL AUTHORITY

JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH

The Postal Authority's "Business Line for Express Mail Services" launched in 1989 is neither express, nor service, nor good business, the report states.

Although express mail customers grew by only 48 percent between 1990 and 1994, the number of complaints increased 533% over this period. Many customers abandoned the public messenger service for private and more efficient messenger companies.

The comptroller says the door-to-door messenger services, and indeed all the others, were a losing proposition that the authority had to subsidize in 1994 to the tune of NIS 350,000.

Due to the lack of suitable facilities and computerization, the authority often failed to collect payment for services that were supplied. In mid-1995, these back debts totaled NIS 2.24 million, almost half of them for services rendered over the previous five years. Only 340 non-paying customers were taken to court, but because of delays, it was difficult to present evidence, and many claims were dropped.

The comptroller lashes out at management, declaring that its behavior "points to serious negligence, even severe harm to public faith in the service. It's easier to preserve credibility than to regain what was lost... The Postal Authority must act quickly to correct the shortcomings and

conduct a basic economic and administrative assessment of its messenger services... to see whether they are worthwhile."

According to the authority spokeswoman, the authority's director-general Ran Levin, who took over less than two years ago from a failing management, quickly became aware of the major problems affecting express mail and appointed a new manager. When he did not improve things, Levin replaced him with yet another manager and has personally invested time in rehabilitating the service, spokeswoman Cigal Galil said.

The Postal Authority believes that with time and additional work, the service could be a major money-maker, especially due to the growing use of mail-order catalogs and cable TV's shopping channel, and the resultant dispatch of goods directly to the home.

Express mail includes a number of services: door-to-door, in which a letter or package is picked up from the customer and taken to another address; "bring me," when mail is brought to the customer from another address; double transfer, when the messenger exchanges mail between two people; payment of bills at a postal bank and bringing the documents to the customer; and bringing mail from a post office branch in the customer's home.

Equipment worth millions never made it to warehouses

DEFENSE MINISTRY

STEVE RODAN

MILLIONS of dollars worth of equipment paid for by the Defense Ministry has never made it to IDF warehouses, the state comptroller says in her report.

The IDF has failed to coordinate its acquisition of equipment with the Defense Ministry, which pays the bills. The result is that thousands of items purchased are simply unaccounted for, the report says.

The comptroller says that for years the IDF did not bother to transfer receipts of delivery to the Defense Ministry for the equipment it received. The result was that the ministry had no idea whether millions of dollars of equipment paid for had already been delivered.

The comptroller calls this "a grave shortcoming" and asserts that the IDF Quartermaster never performed a survey of the missing equipment.

It was not possible to determine how much equipment was paid for and yet never received by the military, the comptroller says. According to a survey of acquisition records from the air

force, however, as much as \$47 million of equipment is missing.

The report says that the Defense Ministry is aware of the failure to record equipment received. The Defense Ministry's purchasing mission in New York is formally responsible for ensuring that items purchased are delivered, but told the comptroller that it does not have information to fulfill this task.

The Defense Ministry purchases billions of dollars worth of arms and spare parts for the IDF. The lion's share of the money is received annually from the US in military aid. All but \$400m. of this money must be spent in the US.

The comptroller says the IDF does not have guidelines regarding the responsibility of its suppliers and what to do when they do not honor their contracts.

The comptroller cites the navy, which purchased a large amount of engines for the Dabar patrol boats, and did not insist on holding the supplier responsible for the terms of the contract.

Key Representative Rates table showing US dollar, Sterling, and Mark exchange rates.

INFLATION STOCK MARKET table with sub-sections for New York market indexes and NYSE/AMEX.

Other stock market indexes table including FTSE 100, Nikkei, and Hang Seng.

Israeli stocks in NY table listing various companies like Bank Leumi, Bank Hapoalim, and others.

INFLATION MONEY MARKET table showing Dollar crosses and Libor rates.

Foreign financial data courtesy of CommStock Trading Ltd. table.

INFLATION COMMODITIES AND METALS table including US commodities and Spot market metals.

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TEL AVIV STOCKS

Main Tel Aviv Stock Market table with columns for Name, Price, Change, and Volume. Includes sub-sections for Multi-Sided trading and Two-Sided trading.

ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK advertisement with logo and slogan 'THE PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO'.

INTERNATIONAL STOCK PRICES

Large table of international stock prices for various countries including New York, London, Paris, Frankfurt, and others.

Both indexes rise slightly

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET ROBERT DANIEL. Two-Sided Index +0.07%, Maof Index +0.04%.

STOCKS were little changed yesterday, with Tadiran rising for a second day after obtaining a military contract, while Elite fell on speculation it will take a charge for its European operations.

French stocks rise, buck trend of listless trading

LONDON (Reuters) - A yen attack on the dollar which cut it down by two yen in two days appeared to run out of steam yesterday, and French stocks bucked a trend of dull and listless trading in Europe to close sharply higher.

US stocks rebound, but still close lower

LONDON (AP) - Stocks rebounded yesterday, after trailing lower with bonds on new signs of a strengthening economy.

WALL STREET REPORT

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 4.33 points to close at 5,569.08, after dropping almost 26 points earlier in the session. It was the fourth straight session that the sluggish blue-chip index ended with a change of less than 15 points.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

Table showing currency cross-rates for MARK, STERLING, YEN, SFR, and FF.

